In some households religious pictures are in evidence, while in others there are none at all. In some families there are formal religious observances for the group. In others there may be none, or family members may be individually given to silent prayer. However varied the pattern may be, qualitatively it is one which allows for the action of individual choice and conscience.

There is definite evidence that village opinion concerning the efficacy of recourse to the saint's shrines is sharply divided, and there is good reason to conclude that this ambivalence is of recent development, a part of the acculturation process. Saint's shrines are very common in the Middle East. They are used by Muslims and Christians alike, and in many cases they probably stem from pagan prototypes. Among the Lebanese Christians, shrines are visited by the faithful primarily in the fulfillment of vows usually made in connection with the curing of illness, the achievement of conception, the determination of the sex of an unborn child, and so on—in other words, the emphasis is on medical problems. The visitor may perform the ritual for his own sake or on behalf of someone else.

In Mansūf, the shrine ritual consists of prayers—sometimes written on the walls—and the offering of candles or olive oil which are burned in the shrine. One informant also suggested a penitential element—walking to the shrine barefoot or crawling to it on hands and knees. The shrines are located at some distance from each other and from the house clusters, and a person is not likely to go near them except with deliberate intent and effort. Presumably the effort is not made except by those who believe in what they are doing.

There definitely are such individuals in the village. On one occasion the writer saw two persons make offerings of candles at one of the shrines ("because someone is sick," an informant explained). Small paper candle wrappings were observed in the vicinity of all the shrines, and there were bottles for olive oil in all of them.

In contrast, there were the statements of several informants, some of whom was in the habit of using the shrines. One said (before the subject had really been investigated) that the shrines were no longer used at all. Another, more specifically, denied any personal belief in the holy which the saints were supposed to give the sick and went on to express the opinion that no one else in the village believed in it either. When this informant was faced with undeniable evidence to the contrary, the general claim was modified, but the basic attitude had been revealed. A third informant stated flatly that some believed and some did not, and that among the former there were those who even had dreams about being visited by saints checking up on the fulfillment of vows. But this informant added the opinion that though some people were believers, they might very likely deny it if they were asked because they had heard that such beliefs were a mark of ignorance. Ignorance of what? It might well have been asked. Presumably, ignorance of, and lack of faith in, modern medical practices which, to be sure, do not eliminate all